IF I MAY HELP.

If I may help some burdened heart
His heavy load to bear;
If any little song of mine
May cheer a soul somewhere;
If I may lead some grieving one
To know that loss is gain,
Or bring some shadowed soul to light,
I shall not live in vain.

If I may help bewildered ones
To find life's grandest clew;
If I may steady faltering feet,
Or help some heart be true;
If I may bring a tender touch
To some lone couch of pain,
Or whisper words of hope and strength,
I shall not live in vain.

If I may give disheartened ones
The impetus they need,
Or rescue the oppressed from hands
Of cruelty and greed;
If I may bring concord and love
Where strife and hatred reign,
Or be a friend to friendless ones,
I shall not live in vain.

If I may battle some great wrong,
Some worldly current stem,
Or give a hand of fellowship
Where other hearts condemn;
If I grow strong to do and bear,
Amid life's stress and strain,
And keep a pure heart everywhere,
I shall not live in vain.

If I may give forth sympathy,
And keep a heart of youth,
Or help myself and fellow-men
To grander heights of truth;
However small my part may be,
To cleanse the world of stain,
If I but do the thing I can,
I shall not live in vain.

—Mrs. Frank A. Breck, in Ram's Horn—Copyrighted.

Little France

A ROMANCE OF THE DAYS WHEN "THE GREAT LORD HAWKE" WAS KING OF THE SEA

BY

CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY

Author of "Commodore Paul Jones," "Reuben James," "For the Freedom of the Sea," etc.

CHAPTER IV.—CONTINUED.

His only son, the young Comte de Rohan—and save de Kersaint almost his only relative—had married Mistress Anne Page, of Virginia. The young man had been a naval officer whose ship had been stationed upon the coast of North America, where he had greatly enjoyed the spontaneous and warm-hearted hospitality of the colonists of the famous old dominion. Carried away by her charms of mind and person, and without waiting for the consent of his father, he straightway married this young woman from the new world whose beauty and character had made so deep an impression upon him, and he had brought her to France in his own frigate.

His father, at first highly incensed at what he deemed a mesalliance, had sternly refused to receive him; but the tales of the beauty of his unwelcome daughter-in-law, which were poured in his ear by those who fell under the sway of her loveliness, and certain substantial evidences of the great estates in the new world belonging to the honorable family from which she sprang, and to which she was sole heiress, which his son had found means to bring to his attention, had first awakened his curiosity and finally mollified his wrath. He had at last consented to an interview, and thereafter had promptly succumbed to the charms of the winsome and beautiful American as completely as had his son. Resigning his commission in the French navy the young count and his wife, overjoyed at the reconciliation, had returned to his father's house and, as he fondly hoped, settled down to years of domestic bliss and tranquillity.

There a daughter, the first and only child of this strange union, was born; but the life that came was paid for by the life that went, for when the child was but a few days old, the young mother died. The inconsolable young count did not long survive the loss of his adored wife. To distract his grief he resumed his service in the French navy, receiving his old rank through his father's influence, and was shortly after wrecked and lost with his ship on a voyage to the French East Indies, while his daughter was still an infant.

It was a crushing blow to the old man, but with Spartan resolution he bore up under it and turned to his little granddaughter for comfort and consolation. As the days sped away the child intrenched herself more and more in the old man's heart. He withdrew himself from the world in which he had been so great and gay a figure and devoted himself assiduously to her welfare.

Little Anne, Countess de Rohan in her own right, lived alone with her grandfather in the old Chateau de Josselin. Save when unavoidably called away on business connected with the management of his estates he rarely left her. He watched over her with the solicitude of a mother and the devotion of a lover. The withered old man grew to love her as few children were then loved—certainly with such a feeling as few Frenchmen of rank at that day ever exhibited toward a child. She was the sole heiress to all his possessions, the last of that branch of her ancient house, and he lavished upon her a depth of tenderness and a wealth of affection which surrounded her with an atmosphere of adoration.

Loath to part with her, instead of committing her education to one of the great conventual schools, as was the custom among the noblesse of the country, he supervised it himself. Her growing mind afforded him new food for wonder daily, her present engrossed his mind, her future filled his dreams. As he was one of the most accomplished gentlemen of his time, and had been a man of the world in the highest and best sense of the word, she received such training as had not often been bestowed upon a young demoiselle of France.

In but one particular, indeed, the old man's scheme of education, in the carrying out of which he was assisted by the best masters that money could procure, might have been deemed faulty. The marquis, as he grew old, lived more and more in the past—and as he went backward in time he took the little maid back with him.

The same strange fancy which led him to restore mediaeval usages and customs as far as possible, and which made his favorite study the ancient tales of chivalry, the stories of the hardy adventurous knights like the great du Guesclin, some of whose blood indeed ran in his veins, gave an unusual turn to the thoughts of his granddaughter. She, like him, was steeped in the romantic lore of ancient days. The traditions of their ancient house, the deeds of daring, devotion, and courage which had made the de Rohans illustrious, were as familiar to her as fairy tales and childish rhymes are to other children. Her own maidenly vision dimly comprehended the future through the windows of the past.

It was to this ancient chateau with its suggestion of history, its atmosphere of romance, and its Breton wild rose, scarcely reaching the dignity of a bud yet, but still inclosed in the soft calyx of innocence and inexperience, that Grafton was brought at the request of de Kersaint through the complaisance of the marquis.

It was evening when the two gentlemen, attended by a numerous retinue, rode up to the great gateway. The few miles that intervened between Brest and the Chateau de Josselin had been passed in animated conversation, and the acquaintance which had begun on the decks of Le Thesee under such strange auspices, had ripened into a pleasant intimacy. The dashing young American sailor had been attracted by the evidences of culture, the keen but kindly humor, the rich stores of knowledge, possessed by the marquis; and the latter had been touched by the pleasant deference and open frankness, as well as the shrewd common sense and graceful manner, of his young companion.

When they arrived before the gate of the castle as the sun had set the drawbridge was raised. As they

LAZILY OPENED THE CURTAINS.

waited for it to be lowered in answer to the marquis' hail, the young man remarked that it all seemed quite mediaeval, fitting in appropriately with the wild surroundings and the barren shore.

"Monsieur," answered the marquis, gravely, as if fearing a covert jest, "I keep, so far as I can, the state of my forefathers. This is my domain," he continued, as they rode through the ranks of the guards who had been paraded underneath the great gateway, and who were dressed in quaint outlandish costumes which reminded Grafton of the pictures in some old book, "this is my castle, these my retainers. Here my will is law. Within these walls I am supreme, saving only the feudal rights of my over-lord and master, His Most Christian Majesty, whom God preserve. While you are here, monsieur, the castle is yours. You are free to come and go where you will within the walls, and should you not attempt to pass the gate, you will find nothing to remind you that you are a prisoner. So securely guarded is my castle, Monsieur Grafton, that I do not even ask you for your parole. You hear, Jean-Renaud?" he added, turning to the sergeant of the guard, "Monsieur Grafton is an American gentleman who honors our poor house by accepting its hospitality. Mark you—and you, too, monsieur, pray give heed—he is free to go anywhere but over the walls or through the gate. See to it, Jean-Renaud, that in no case is he allowed to escape. You will forgive the necessity for these orders, Monsieur Grafton, but I am responsible for you. The chatelaine?" he added, turning again to Jean-Renaud, "where is she?"

"She has retired, Monsieur le Marquis," answered Jean-Renaud, "not knowing that you were to be here this evening. Shall I go——?"

"It is my wish that she be not disturbed, Jean-Renaud. Come, captain, let us enter. Supper and a bottle of wine after our long ride will doubtless be as acceptable to you as to me. Allow me to precede you, monsieur—only to show you the way in these old halls, of course."

After partaking of a generous repast in the ancient banqueting hall of the castle, Grafton, now attended by Jean-Renaud, was shown to a huge room, richly and comfortably furnished, the windows of which overlooked the garden. He was informed that this was to be his own chamber during his sojourn at the castle. Tired out by the trying experiences of the day, and invited thereto by a great old-fashioned, comfortable-looking bed, the young man immediately retired and soon sank to rest.

CHAPTER V.

THE CRADLE SONG.

"YOU say we have a visitor, Josette?"

"Yes, mademoiselle, so Jean-Renaud says."

"An English gentleman?"

"Jean-Renaud thinks so, because he certainly is not French."

"But what did he look like?"

"Handsome! Hein! His hair curls, 'tis very blond—and his eyes! Ciel! Blue, blue like the sea, mademoiselle, and his cheeks red——"

"Mon Dieu! Quel beau chevalier! You must be in love with him, Josette!"

"No, mademoiselle! Nay, 'tis not for the likes of me——"

"True, true," said the young chatelaine gravely. "He is a noble knight, doubtless. He had red cheeks, you say?"

"Yes, mademoiselle."

"Not like my pale ones, I suppose; but then the English always were gross and red in the cheek."

"But, mademoiselle——"

"That will do, Josette, you weary me with this stranger. Did you bring the new dolls?"

"Here they are, mademoiselle," said the faithful Josette, producing two elaborately dressed Parisian dolls from beneath her apron. "They came by special messenger from Paris last night after you had retired."

"Oh," exclaimed the young girl, rapturously, "how beautiful they are! I thought I had about done with dolls, but these are so lovely. What grand dames they are! Give them to me, Josette."

"How kind of Monsieur le Marquis, mademoiselle," answered the maid, who was also the foster sister and youthful confidante of the countess, as she handed her the two dolls.

"Oh, do you know," said the capricious little maiden, "these are beautiful dolls, but I don't believe I like them after all as much as old 'Toto.'"

"I brought her along, too," returned Josette, producing her from a pocket in her dress, "I thought you might want her, mademoiselle."

"Oh, give her to me!" exclaimed the young mother, extending her hand to take the old rag affair, "I am tired of walking and talking, Josette. You are so very uninteresting this morning. You can't speak of anything but that Englishman! Let's sit down here under this beech-tree and sing the dolls to sleep. You take the two from Paris. We'll play they're twins, and I will take poor old Toto. She shall not be neglected for the beautiful ladies from the city, shall she? Poor old Toto! I shall never have any more dolls, Josette. I certainly am too old for them. If it were a real baby, now, or a knight," continued this small bundle of inconsistencies, "how I would love it! But that is not to be. Helas, Josette! Come, let us put them to sleep."

"But, mademoiselle, 'tis early morning——" responded the unimaginative peasant.

"Stupid, we can play 'tis night, can't we? Besides, it's always good for children to take a nap. Grandfather says, 'the more sleepy the eye in the daytime the brighter the eye at night.' You sit there and I will sit here. Now, sing."

The two children, with that delightful indifference to rank and station which constitutes one of the charms of childhood, sat down on a rustic bench under a handsome old beech-tree. Though both were about the same age, just entering their teens, Josette, who was the younger, would have made two of her young mistress. She had already reached her growth, apparently, for she was tall and large, and her splendid physical development was well set off by the picturesque dress of the Breton peasantry. Her mistress, on the contrary, was small, slender, fragile, undeveloped and physically as much behind her maid as mentally she was her superior. A greater contrast between them could not have been imagined.

"What shall we sing, mademoiselle?" asked Josette. "Shall it be The Fox Gallant?"

"No, we'll sing Toutouie, la, la!"

"Very well, will you begin?"

"No, you."

"Very well. Are you ready?"

"Yes."

"So, then."

Humming the air for a moment, the two voices broke into the plaintive melody of an old Breton cradle song, the refrain of which gave it a title. In default of a rocking-chair—not then indigenous to France—the two bodies swayed back and forth in time to the simple lullaby, or berceuse, the wooden sabots on one pair of large though shapely feet patting the ground in time with the dainty jewel-buckled Louis Quinze slippers upon the other. The words were primitive and childish as befits folk song at its best, and more especially at its beginning in the cradle song, and the music was equally so; yet the emphatic word was repeated at the end of each verse with a long-drawn cadence, and the Toutouie, la, la! rose above the branches with a caressing intonation which a mother might have used to a child.

The gentle air of the summer morning rustled the leaves of the old beech tree in a not inharmonious accompaniment to the melody and swept the sound into the dull ear of a drowsy man. Philip Grafton had forgotten himself in the great bed of the large chamber above the beech-tree. He lazily opened the curtains of the bed as the sound came faintly into the room, and the flood of light which poured upon him completed his awakening. He lay listening a few moments and then rose and leisurely walked to the window.

It was a heavenly morning. The breeze, laden with the sweet fragrance of summer, blew softly across his face through the casement. An enchanting garden, which might have boasted the supervision of the famous Le Notre himself, lay spread before his eyes. Half concealed by the interlacing boughs of the tree he could detect two figures beneath the window, sitting on a bench under the shadow of the beech.

He watched them. They were singing. That wild, plaintive, yet primitive chant came from the two little girls there. The deeper contralto tones of the peasant girl afforded a sweet accompaniment for the girlish treble of the other. The birds twittered in the trees of the garden, and a gay robin on a branch near the window poured out his brave little soul in brilliant bursts of song. It was a chorus of nature harmonizing with the natural song of motherhood, which seemed not inappropriate, though issuing from the lips of children.

"Toutouie, la, la!" What was the queer little refrain? He leaned far out over the window-sill and listened to the singers. He was wont to be awakened by the creaking of the timbers of a heaving ship, and the experience of this morning was as novel as it was delightful. It was interrupted, however, by a knock upon the door.

CHAPTER VI.

EXIT DOLL—ENTER KNIGHT.

AT the sound of Grafton's voice directing him to enter, Sergt. Jean--Renaud, who was accompanied by a slender youth in the livery of the house, opened the door.

"Monsieur is awake?" asked the sergeant, stepping over the threshold and saluting respectfully.

"As you see, sergeant."

"Monsieur slept well?"

"Very well."

"Monsieur wakes early."

"Yes, that song there—" pointing to the window, "do you not hear it?"

"'Tis mademoiselle and Josette," answered Jean-Renaud; "she will be annoyed to think she has disturbed——"

"On no account tell her! Say nothing about it to any one, my good friend. 'Tis delightful! What sing they?"

"A cradle song, monsieur," answered the sergeant. "My old mother sang me to sleep with that song, and thousands of other mothers in Brittany have sung it as well. Toutouie, la, la!" He caught up the refrain, and in a deep though not unmusical voice hummed the air.

"'Tis a pretty song," said Grafton.

"Yes, monsieur, but if you are ready to dress, I have brought Anatole, who is at your service while you are a pris—while you honor our house," he added, with native politeness. "He will serve monsieur. And Monsieur le Marquis bids me say when you are ready he will be pleased to attend you at breakfast. Monsieur realizes that he is—is—while he is within the walls he——"

"I remember everything, my good friend," replied Grafton, "within the walls I am free; outside, a prisoner."

[To Be Continued.]

Something of a Sharper.

Two old fellows in New Hampshire were the sharpest things in the way of bargaining. Cy Pettingill made brooms for a living and Ezra Hoskins kept a store. One day Cy came in with a load of brooms and the dickering began, relates the Columbia Record.

Cy was a man who could see a bargain through a six-inch plank on a dark night, and Ezra could hear a dollar bill rattle in a bag of feathers a mile off. Well, they began, and their conversation was something like this:

"Ezra, I want to sell you these brooms."

"All right, Cy, I'll take them."

Cy said: "I don't want any store bargains, I want cash for them."

They talked and gadded a while, and then Ezra said: "I'll tell you what I'll do, Cy, I'll give you half cash and half trade."

Cy took a fresh chew of tobacco, pulled a straw out of one of the brooms, and said:

"That'll be all right, Ezra."

After he had put the brooms in the store, Ezra said: "Here's your money, Cy, now what do you want in trade?"

Cy looked around for a spell, cocked his eye up to the ceiling, stuck his cud in his cheek, and said:

"Well, if it is all the same for you, Ezra, I'll take brooms."

Better Record Book.

The clerk in charge of a farriery class held by the county council at Preston, England, gave a stalwart blacksmith a note book and pencil.

"Wot's this 'ere book for?" asked the man.

"To take notes,' 'replied the clerk.

"'Notes?' Wot sort o' notes?"

"Why, anything that the lecturer says that you think important and want to remember you make a note of it in the book."

The Lancashireman looked scornful. "Oh!" said he. "Anything I want to remember I must make a note of in this 'ere book, must I? Then wot do you think my blooming yed's for?"—Cornhill Magazine.

Home in a Stew.

Dawkins—And was it very hot in India?

Jawkins—Hot! Simply melting. Why, one of our fellows stayed out too long in the sun one day and had to be ladled back to his bungalow.—London Tit-Bits.

GROCERY MAN AND COOK.

Exchange Left-Handed Compliments and Come Out About Even.

"Better let me bring you a nice eggplant this mornin'," said the grocery man to the pretty cook, according to the Chicago Daily News. "Then you can make your own eggs, Evelina. What do you do with 'em all?"

"Batter cakes, sweet cakes, custards an' omelettes mostly," replied the cook.

"Don't you ever make eggnog?"

"I don't know what it is," declared the cook. "I've heard tell of it, but I couldn't say whether it was baked or fried."

"It ain't neither," said the grocery man. "It's biled. If you go to fry a eggnog you spoil it. I'd sooner eat it raw. Where was you Thursday night?"

"Stayed in an' sewed buttonholes on my dishcloths," said the pretty cook.

"What was that for?"

"To make 'em look pretty—same reason you've got your mustach curled. I think a man looks well curlin' up his mustach with curlin' tongs—like a girl."

"I never seen a girl curl her mustach myself," said the grocery man. "I wasn't to blame for this, though. It was the barber. He got me tied in the chair so's I couldn't move an' gagged me so's I couldn't holler an' then got out his hot irons an' done the job. I didn't want him to do it."

"I s'pose not," said the pretty cook. "Sure thing I didn't. I knowed I was beautiful the way I was. My natural looks make me enough trouble with the girls."

"I don't think they ought to blame you for 'em," said the cook. "You can't help your face. I had an uncle once that looked something like you—not quite as bad, maybe—but he was sensitive about it all the same, which you ain't."

"He ought to have had his face amputated if it was as bad as that," observed the grocery man. "Or he might have gone to one of these face foundries an' had it recast. I knew a feller oncet they called Nosey, an' he saved his money an' went to a professor an' got his beak trimmed down so he didn't hardly have enough left to smell fried onions. Then they got to callin' him Pug, an' he went back to the professor an' wanted to know if he had any of the old material left to put back agin. The professor done the best he could an' the job looked all right, but Nosey died of heart failure less'n a month after that. He was scared to death for fear somethin' would make him sneeze."

"You'd better see one o' them professors," observed the pretty cook.

"Why would I?" asked the grocery man. "My nose is all right as far as it goes an' it goes as far as I want to foller it."

"Your nose may be all right."

"I guess it is," said the grocery man, indignantly. "How about my hair?"

"I don't like red myself," said the cook, "but the color's good enough for them as likes it. It's your lip I object to."

Disenchanted Don.

A novel illustration of the saying: "Listeners never hear any good of themselves," comes from the London Tatler. An Oxford don, more highly esteemed for intellectual activity than modesty, was asked to speak into a phonograph. A little later the machine was turned on again, and he was requested to listen to his own voice. He listened in silence, then turned to the company. "It is very strange!" he said, in a tone of mingled surprise and resentment. "I can't understand it, but through this machine I am made to speak in a peculiarly bumptious and affected manner!"

Why He Was Skeptical.

Parson Brown—Why do you doubt the genuineness of Green's conversion?

Deacon Smith—Because he never says anything about what a shameless wretch and miserable sinner he used to be.—Chicago Daily News.